SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, there are two parts of this question. The first part is a about using ethical guidelines in R.& D in gene technology. This question really does not relate to gene banks, but to things like stem cell research. And, this does not fall under my Ministry. They fall under the Ministry of Health. But, in any case, I might inform the hon. Member that we have proposed a joint advisory committee between the ICMR and the Department of Biotechnology, which is under my Ministry, to prepare guidelines for ethical standards in research of this nature. And, in any case, now, we are issuing guidelines in all such areas. For example, in the filed of health, in particular, because modern technology will allow you to inject things into your body without knowing what the consequences of that would be. So, I think, we have to be extremely careful and safety standards will have to be evolved. And, my Ministry, with the help of the Ministry of Health, is evolving those standards for all kinds of research that the hon. Member is talking about.

Sir, the second part of the question relates to medicinal plants and Ayurveda. In fact, the hon. Member should know that we are the only country, in the world, which has this kind of wealth. And, we have in fact set up a data base on it, which had never been done before. That will soon be completed. Now, for the purpoess of granting FDA clearance, ayurvedic medicines are one of the tests on the basis of which those clearances are granted.

Funds for roads in NE region

*323. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of funds allotted and utilised during the last three years in the States of North Eastern Region under road funds to upgrade highways and main district roads of the NER; and

(b) the names of the roads for which allocations had been made and the details of the progress of works on these roads of the region during this period?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) The works on National Highways are mainly executed through

National Higways Authority of India (NHAI), State Governments and Border Roads Organisation (BRO). Details of funds allocated and utilised for National Highways works by the State Governments in the North Eastern Region during the last three years are given at Annexure [See Appendix 206, Annexure No. 11] Year-wise expenditure incurred on National Highways by NHAI and BRO are given at Annexure [See Appendix 206, Annexure No. 11]. State-wise allocation is not made to BRO and NHAI. Also, funds to State Governments are allocated under the Central Road Fund (CRF) Scheme, Economic Importance and Inter-State Connectivity (El & ISC) Schemes for improvement of State Roads. Details are given at Annexure [See Appendix 206, Annexure No. 11].

(b) All National Highways were developed and maintained from the above funds and their names are given at Annexure [See Appendix 206, Annexure No. 12]. The works sanctioned under the Central Road Fund (CRF) Scheme, Economic Importance and Inter-State Connectivity (EI&ISC) Schemes indicating the names of roads, during the last three years are given at Annexure [See Appendix 206, Annexure No 12]. Progress made on National Highways' works completed during the last three years and length of National Highways improved and bridges completed on National Highways are given at Annexure [See Appendix 206, Annexure No 12].

SHRI T.R. BAALU: May I request the hon. Chairman to allow me to make me small corrections in my answers? The correction is in annexure-IV, under the heading 'Meghalaya State', the entry against NH-44 may be read as 'Shillong-Jowai-Meghalaya-Assam Border' instead of 'Shillong-Jowai-Badarpur-Agartala Sabroom'. Then, Sir, under the State of Mizoram, against NH-54, instead of 'Silchar', 'Bairangte' may be read. Similarly, against NH-154, 'Dhaleswar' is wrongly printed; it may be ignored.

SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Sir, the hon. Minister has given a detailed reply to my question. I appreciate it. But, we see in the reply that most of the works, pertaining to the last three years, are in progress. It means these works have not been completed for the last three years. Most of the District Headquarters of the North-Eastern Region are not connected by major roads. May I know a specific date from the hon. Minister, by which date the District Headquarters of any region would be connected by major roads?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, this exactly was the concern of the hon.

Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has advised us to see that all the districts and capitals are connected by roads, otherwise there will be no development of the North-Eastern Region. That's why he has advised us to go for a Special Accelerated Road Development Programme, in which the constructions of about 7,639 km. roads are in the offing. In the phase 'A', we are going to construct 1,310 kms. of roads, which would cost around Rs. 4618 crores. The DPR is in progress and in the phases 'B' and 'C, we will be taking about 5,122 kms. and 1,207 kms. respectively.

SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Sir, my second supplementary is this. The hon. Minister has mentioned about the Special Accelerated Road Development Programme in the North Eastern Region. Under this Programme, he has rightly said, 7,639 kilometres of road, including highways was proposed for development. The Programme involves widening of 3,251 kilometres of national highways. May I know from the hon. Minister as to how many kilometres under this Programme have been widened till today?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, it is just a matter of time. Just now we got the clearance, and the approval. The DPR is in progress, and the estimate sanctioned. So, we are at it, and, immediately, we will go for execution.

SHRI SILVIUS CONDPAN: May I know from the hon. Minister as to why the allocation made during 2003-04 is different from that made in 2004-05? The allocation for Assam during 2004-05 was Rs. 108 Crores, and the expenditure was Rs. 106 Crores, but, surprisingly, the allocation went down to Rs. 78 crores, and the expenditure was Rs. 77 crores. I want to know why this difference in allocation is there.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, it is not a question of paucity of funds. The State Government has to spend the money. If they send a request, definitely, we will consider it.

KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Sir, a lot is being done for the development of the North Eastern Region. It is not just in the matter of roads, but in every field, a lot is being done. But there is a feeling of neglect in the whole of the North Eastern Region. A decade or two back, -the Governor, who came from outside, but was there for three years, told me that the North-East is so much neglected that if the Indian Airlines have some problem with aircraft, it is the flight to Guwahati that is cancelled. So, it is this feeling of neglect that needs to be removed.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, I do not think the North is neglected. When you compare the road density per thousand square kilometres, the Indian average is 19.95 kilometres. In the North East it is 26.6 kilometres. For one lakh population, as far as India is concerned, the density is 6.4 kilometres, whereas in the North East it is 17.88 kilometres. There is no negligence on the part of the Central Government.

SHRIMATI SYEDAANWARA TAIMUR: Thank you, Sir. While giving the written reply the Minister said, "The works on National Highways are mainly executed through the National Highways Authority of India, the State Governments, and the Border Roads Organisation." But there is a plan for converting onelane roads to twolane roads. While constructing two lane roads, big, tig roadside trees are cut. Formerly, the PWD kept a fund for planting roadside trees. May I know from the hon. Minister, through you Sir, whether a fund is kept for planting roadside trees while constructing twolane roads?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Sir, we are having an ambitious plan for planting trees on both sides of the National Highways. We have got special funds for a particular plantation. Definitely, we will take care of it, and her suggestion will be taken care of.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next Question. Question No. 324.

Investment in ARIs

*324. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN:

MAULANA OBAIDULLAH KHAN AZMI :tt Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of investments made in agro and rural industries during the last three years and as on date in different States, State-wise;

(b) what are the problems of these industries; and

(c) what strategy has been devised to give a boost to the agro and rural industries?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHABIR PRASAD), (a) to (c) A Statement is placed on the Table of the Sabha.

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††The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Maulana Obaidullah Khan Azmi.